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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Forget Gigi, read The Cat

By Beth

Not to say that Gigi isn't worth reading. It's a classic novel that has got the attention it's deserved. But the second novel The Cat is neglected. I can't blame this when another story is attached to a novel it seems to be a filler but this isn't the case.

The Cat deals with a sensitive young boy. He's lives a quiet life with his mother and has a special relationship with his cat. Actually he has a deep understanding of cats that no one can seem to make sense of. He is thrust into a marriage with a local girl Camille.

Afer marriage he realizes she wasn't the girl he thought. She's more needy and isn't satisifed with the marriage. He begins to think about the cat he left at home. Then a fierce battle between the cat and the wife begins.

An interesting concept and Colette pulls it off well.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Evocative, poetic, amazing

By Chappa

These are the first works I've read by Colette, and all I can say is that I am amazed by the evocative power of her descriptions. The time and place she describes is long gone, but that atmosphere is successfully conveyed by these pages.

"Gigi" is the story of a young girl raised by three older women (her mother and two aunts). In a sense it is about the division between duty and feelings, following convention or following one's heart. This story is not as deep as the second one, but one can't help being amused by the title character and her reactions to the education the three women impose upon her.

"The Cat" is longer the first story and more ambitious. This novella, which is often considered a study in jealousy, follows a young couple as they live the first moments of their marriage. Interestingly enough, Camille does not have to compete with another woman for Alain's love, but with his beloved cat, Saha. All three characters are developed in a masterful manner, and all of them act according to understandable human motives, including the cat. The final paragraph of the story is simply outstanding. It is almost a revelation, and such an important insight into Alain's personality.

As you know, Colette is one of the many great women of the French literary tradition. Her style is clear, simple, and deep. If you enjoy evocative literature, you won't be disappointed by this book, and if you

happen to like cats, you will be amazed by Colette's understanding of them in the second story. Both selections, however, constitute an unforgettable reading experience.

Thanks for taking the time to read! Later...

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

GiGi, but not as in the musical

By Joanna D.

Gigi was really about a time, a place and a way of life that is no more--the Belle Epoque and the demimonde of Paris.

The "demimonde" or twilight or half-world, was the domain of paid courtesans, not prostitutes, but professional "artistes" who made their living as the paid companions of rich men. They often were dancers or actresses and didn't marry--"We never marry in our family" states Gigi's mother. The Belle Epoque ended with World War One and saw the revitalizaton of Paris by Hausmann and others, creating the city's magnificent architecture that we still love today.

Gigi is a young girl of 16. She falls in love with a rich gentlemen of 33, Gaston. But contrary to custom, she wants something quite different that her family has planned for her. This reflects the idealized dream that Colette had of love with a much older man. She herself pursued this dream disastrously by marrying the highly unsuitable Willy, and also assigned her alter-ego Claudine the same but happier dream in her Claudine novels.

Read this for the wonderful evocation of Paris in the gay 90's, and realize that it has little to do with the musical--this is about a way of life that has passed, along with horse drawn carriages, laced hourglass corsets, and women's hats the size of cartwheels.

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